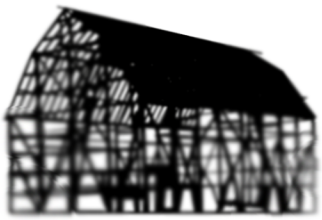
steven arntson



# the emerald arms

a suite for

concertina & voice

2009 Steven Arntson
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The notational system described in the introduction, including bellows direction symbols and other applicable innovations, is hereby placed in the public domain, under the title "Concertina Notation System," for use of anyone, for any purpose, in perpetuity. Further information at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/publicdomain/> or via post at Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, CA, 94105.

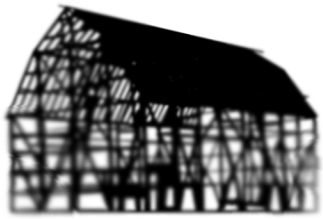
The Emerald Arms by Steven Arntson

First Printing

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Seattle

# the emerald arms



steven arntson

a suite for

concertina & voice


introduction ..... i
i. the emerald arms ..... 1
ii. i ain't got no home ..... 8
iii. bow to your neighbor ..... 14
iv. the barn raising ..... 22

# introduction

*The Emerald Arms* was written in 2008/09, and is part of my continuing effort to expand the repertoire of, and pose new performance problems for, the Anglo concertina. The piece is a four movement suite. The first movement is a sonata (with a few liberties taken), and is, I believe, the first to be composed for this instrument. It consists of a typical explication, development, and recapitulation, with thematic development restricted to the first subject. In performance I prefer to repeat the explication.

The second movement is a song, the arrangement of which is based on Woody Guthrie's parody of the traditional spiritual "Can't Feel At Home." I've had some difficulty obtaining permission to include Woody's lyrics, and to distribute my recording of them, which is the subject of a short essay that follows this introduction.

The third movement is in ternary form, with a waltz as the trio. This isn't a waltz for dancing, as there are a few measures of 4/4 thrown in. I often play the waltz as a standalone piece for live performances.

The final movement is formally discursive, with lyrics summing up the themes of the larger piece.

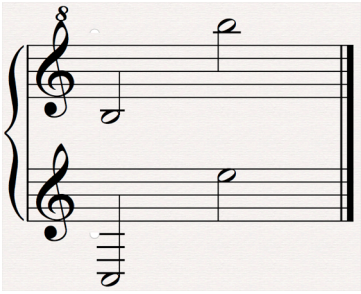
The type of concertina intended for these pieces is a thirty-button C/G Anglo with Lachanal note arrangement. I employ some nonstandard notation in these transcriptions. My first book of tunes, *The Devil's Dreamworld*, contains a lengthy explanation of how and why I developed these devices. As that book is still available, I'll include here only a brief explanation of the symbols.

I apologize for any errors you may find herein. I've tried to be careful, but my best efforts inevitably fall prey to my humble capacities.

Steven Arntson
May 2009, Seattle.

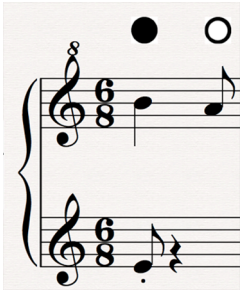
# Range

Upper staff: octave transposed treble. Lower staff: standard treble



# Bisonority

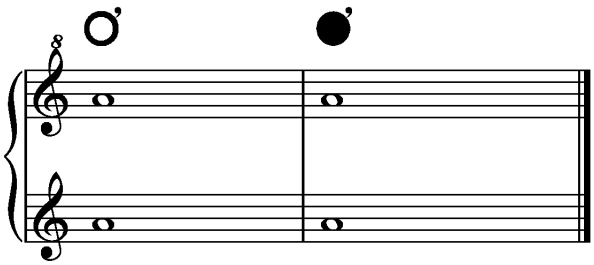
A closed circle indicates that the bellows should be pushed closed, and an open circle indicates that they should be pulled open.



Each bellows directive refers to the note(s) directly beneath it and to all subsequent notes until the establishment of the contrary directive (which in turn persists until opposed). Because bellows directives occupy much of the space at the top of the staff, I generally include other directives, such as fermata, staccati, and accents, below.

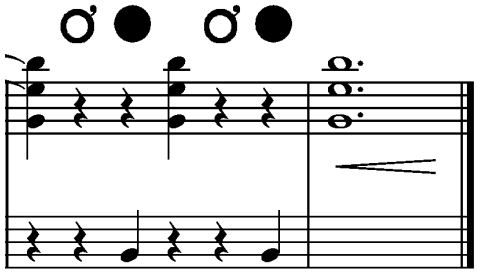
# The Air Button

A breath mark paired with the bellows direction symbol indicates employment of the air button. If the symbol appears above notes, air should be employed while the notes are played.



iii

If the symbol appears above a rest, the air should be employed by itself.



# Initial Bellows State

The relative degree of openness of the bellows at the beginning of a piece is indicated.

closed 3/4 closed half closed 3/4 open open

# Tremolo

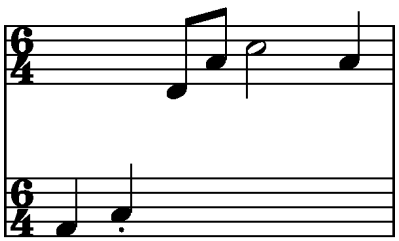
This symbol refers only to the note or chord under which it appears, except in cases of a tie, in which case the symbol also affects the tied note.

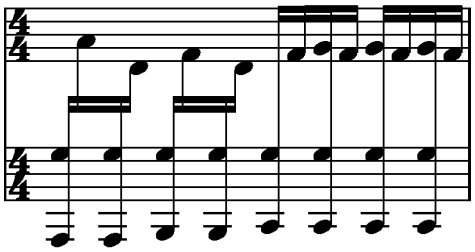
# Diacritical Markings

Diacritical markings affect both vocals and concertina, unless otherwise noted. A hairpin crescendo above the concertina part affects the vocal part, a directive of mezzo-forte above the vocal part applies also to the concertina part, et cetera.

# Cross-Staff Melodies & Placeholder Rests

I avoid placeholder rests when a single line moves between the staves, or whenever the music seems clear without them. Cross-staff melodies are represented one of several ways, with an eye always toward easy readability.





# Fingering Symbols

Fingering symbols similar to those used for piano are employed to clarify particularly difficult or unusual passages. As the thumb is not used for playing notes, I've numbered the fingers as follows.

**1** pointer finger
**2** middle finger
**3** ring finger
**4** little finger

## The Second Movement: An Essay about Intellectual Property

by Steven Arntson

In 1931, the Carter Family recorded a song called “Can’t Feel At Home,” a spiritual about storing up treasure in heaven in the face of the world’s cruelty. The chorus contains the line “I can’t feel at home in this world anymore.” The catalog of copyright entries produced by the Library of Congress Copyright Office contains the following notice for A.P. Carter:

> Can’t feel at home ; words and melody by A.P. Carter. © 1 c. Aug. 25, 1931; E unp. 45219 ; Southern music pub. co., inc., New York. 21378

A.P.’s lyric and melody is substantially equivalent to another song called “This World Is Not My Home,” by Albert E. Brumley, who copyrighted his words and melody in 1936, five years after Carter. Despite the suggestion of authorship suggested by these copyrights, the song is older than either of these versions. In his essay, “Roots of Bluegrass Music,” Richard L. Matteson Jr. charts its history, which reaches back in print to a 1909 hymnal and likely long before that in the oral tradition. There are two recordings that predate that of the Carter Family. One is by Sam Jones, from 1924, and the other is by The Kentucky Thorobreds, from 1927.

Sometime in the late 1930s, Woody Guthrie heard a version of the song and penned a parody of it titled “I Ain’t Got No Home,” which considerably changes the tone of resigned worldly rejection of the original spiritual. The line “Angels beckon me to heaven's open door/And I can’t feel at home in this world anymore,” becomes “Rich man took my home and drove me from my door/And I ain’t got no home in this world anymore.” The earliest recording of “I Ain’t Got No Home” that I know of is from 1940, made by Folkways chronicler Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress.

Sixty-eight years later, in 2008, I heard “Can’t Feel and Home” and “I Ain’t Got No Home,” and felt the latter lyric connected well with some lyrics I was writing for what would become *The Emerald Arms* suite. I decided to arrange “I Ain’t Got No Home” as the second movement. After creating the recording and sheet music of the entire work, I set out to discover whose permission I should ask before giving the suite away online as free recordings and sheet music.

Because the melody dates back to 1909, it’s in the public domain (the current cutoff for which is 1923). Guthrie’s lyric, on the other hand, is not. Two companies own different rights to it. The Richmond Organization (TRO) owns the rights to reproducing the song’s sheet music and the Harry Fox Agency (HFA) owns the rights to reproducing sound recordings of the piece.

I approached TRO first, sending them the score I’d written for concertina and voice, which contains many annotations specific to my purpose as well as modifications to the tune’s melody and chords. A few weeks later I received a letter from TRO. “We are enclosing our music copy of I AIN’T GOT NO HOME,” they wrote, “and request that you use the “words and music” from the enclosed copy in your book.” The following page contained a photocopy of the melody line of Woody’s lyric from what looked like a children’s book, accompanied by a cartoon of a guy’s butt protruding from the front door of a house.

As TRO was evidently unwilling to discuss the particulars of my arrangement, I decided, regretfully, to remove Woody's lyrics from the score.

I approached HFA next about securing a mechanical/digital license, hoping for a better resolution. Their website, HarryFox.com, boasts an automated fee calculator called SongFile, which represents over two million songs. The standard fee is 9.1 cents per copy up to 2,500 copies; beyond that, a non-automated license must be negotiated.

My previous album, *The Devil's Dreamworld*, has thus far been downloaded from the Internet Archive fifty thousand times. Were a similar number of downloads to accrue, at the 9.1-cent-per-copy rate, for my version of "I Ain't Got No Home," I'd owe HFA almost five thousand dollars, though my use will have generated no income for me.

I met with an intellectual property lawyer (through the nonprofit group Washington Lawyers for the Arts) to see if there were any other, less expensive option for releasing the song. The lawyer empathized with my frustrations and confirmed that I had explored the correct avenues. At the end of our meeting, he said, "If Woody knew about this, he'd roll over in his grave."

The folk process is as old as music, and depends on the ability of musicians to adapt from existing sources. A.P. Carter heard an old spiritual, probably while on the road, and arranged it for the Carter Family as "Can't Feel At Home." Woody Guthrie took "Can't Feel At Home" and parodied it as "I Ain't Got No Home." As intellectual property laws become more restrictive, the folk process suffers. When Woody sings "Rich man took my home and drove me from my door," I reflect not only on the human right to shelter, but also on the human right to culture.

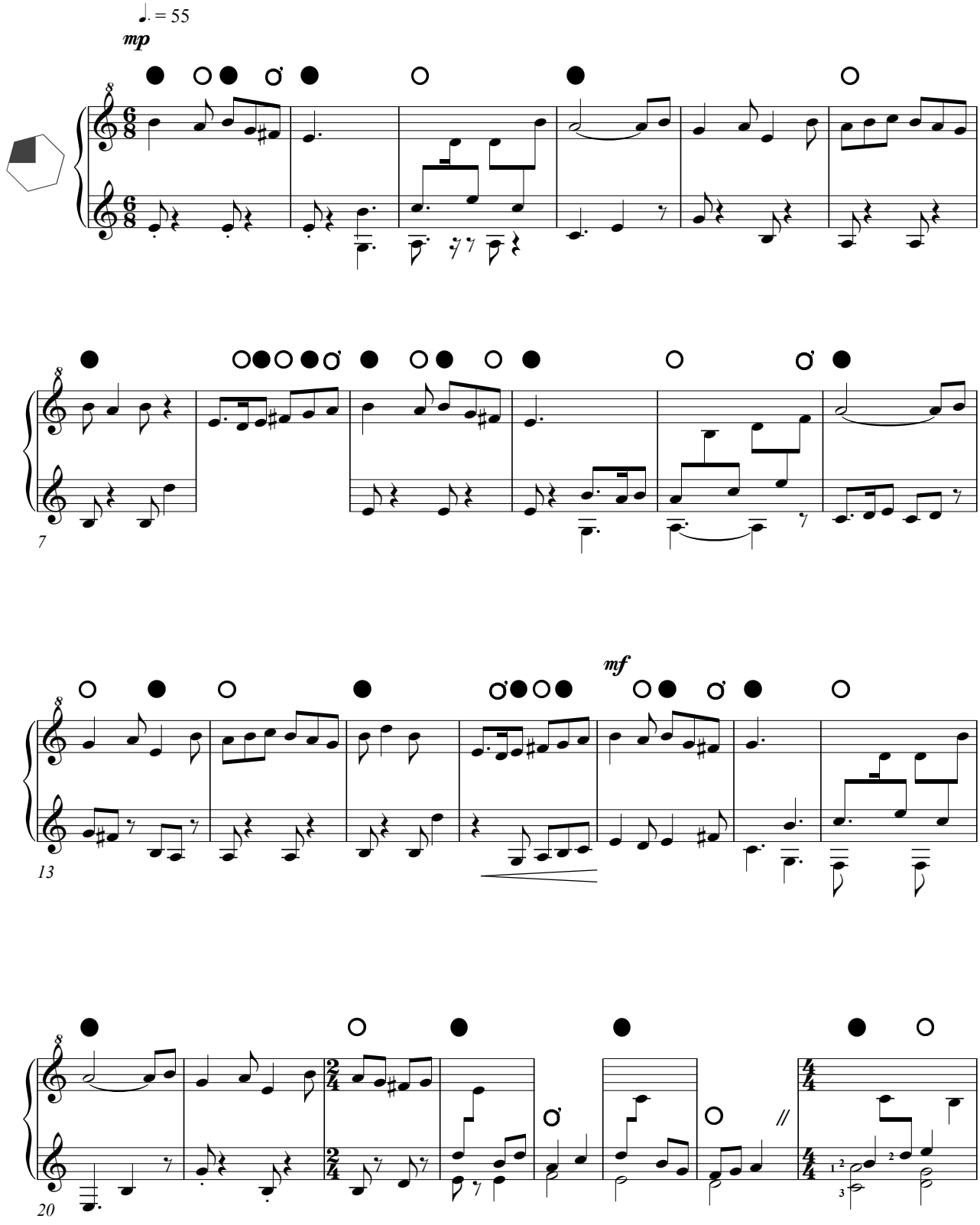
For now, I'm distributing the sound recordings of *The Emerald Arms* without the second movement, and the sheet music without Guthrie's lyrics. I hope eventually I'll be able to include these elements as I originally intended.

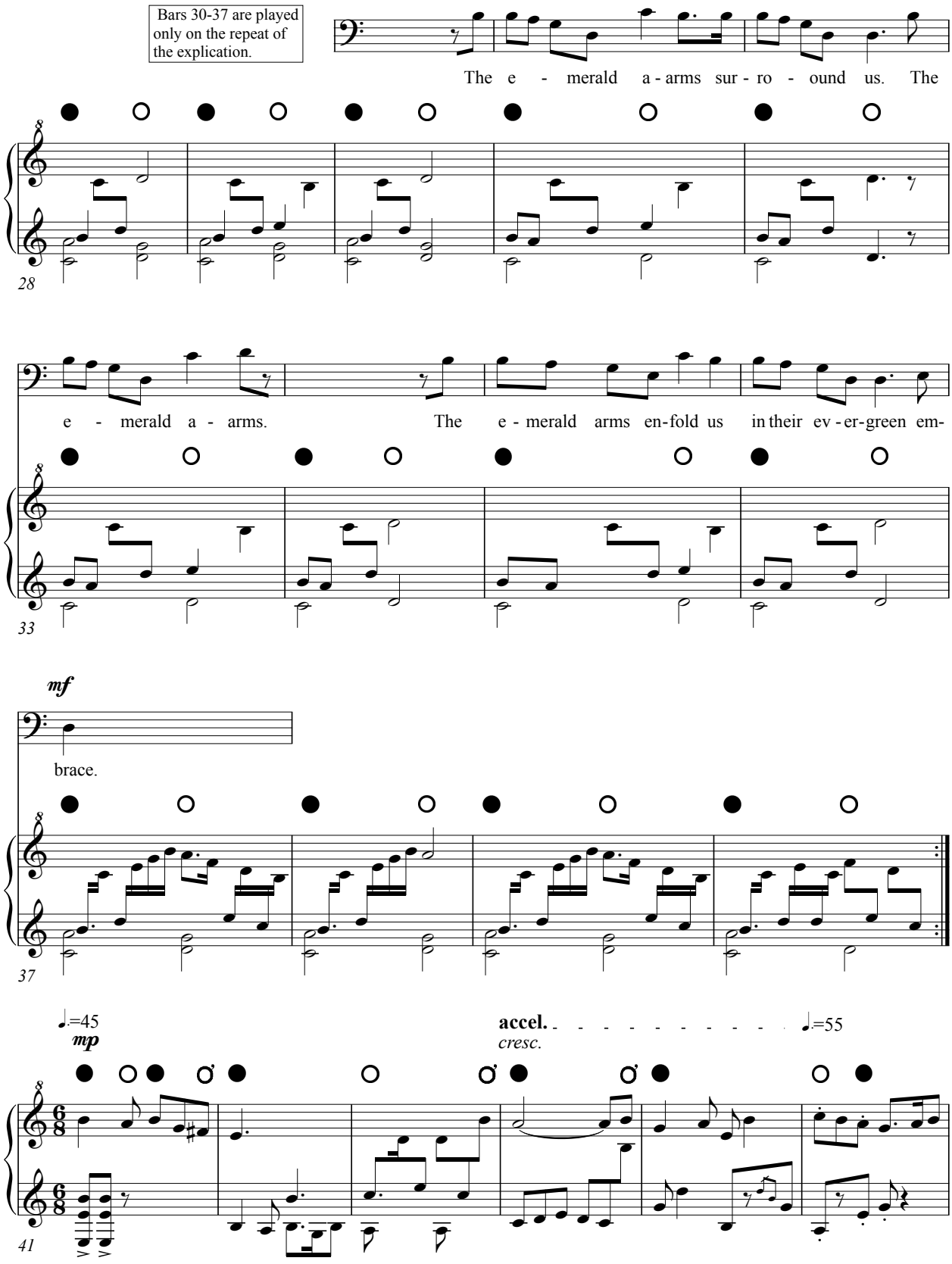
Composing, notating, and recording *The Emerald Arms* has occupied me for two years. I'm proud of the effort, and I hope you enjoy the music. Thank you for supporting this project.

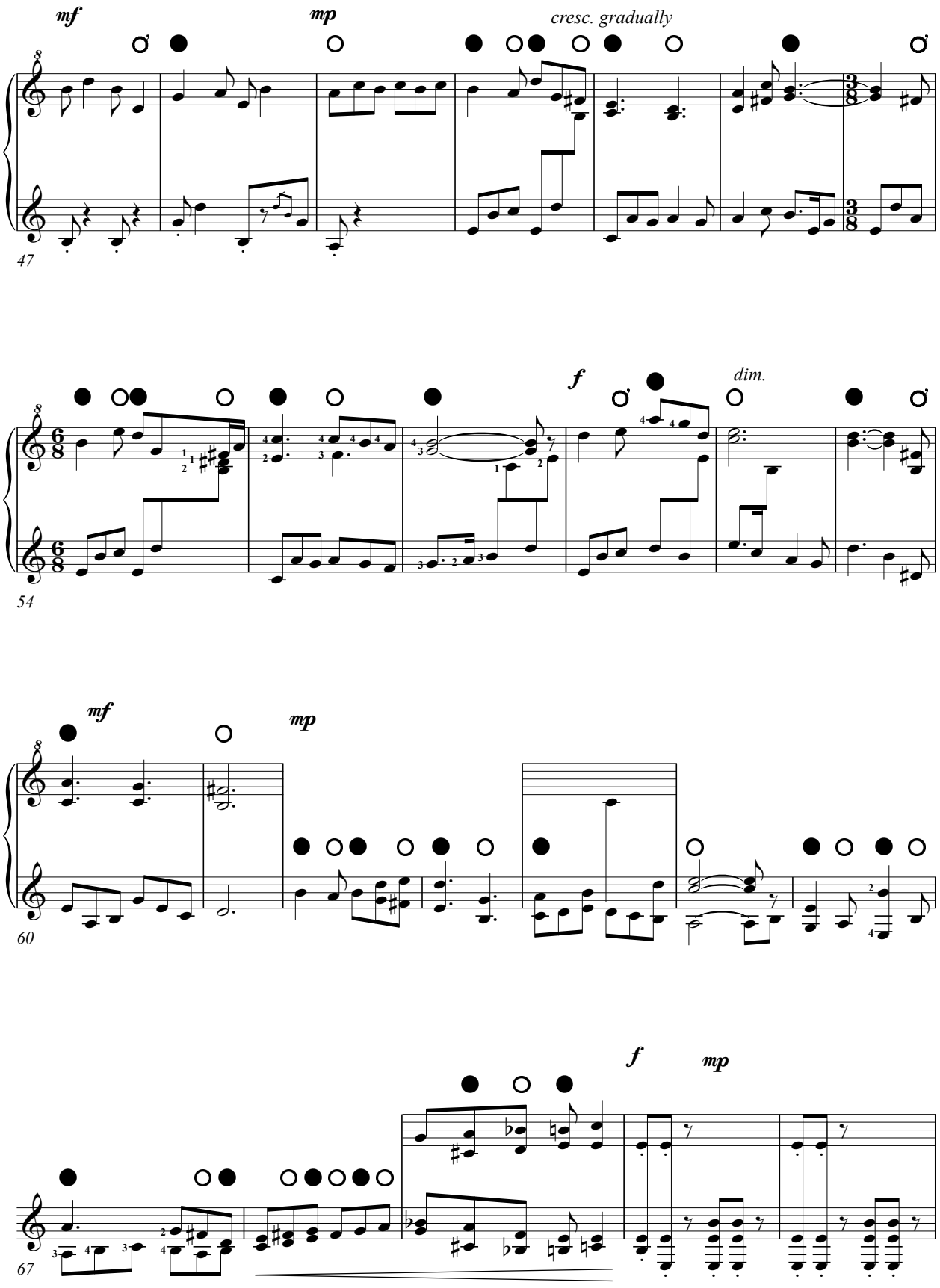
Steven Arntson
Seattle, Washington 2009

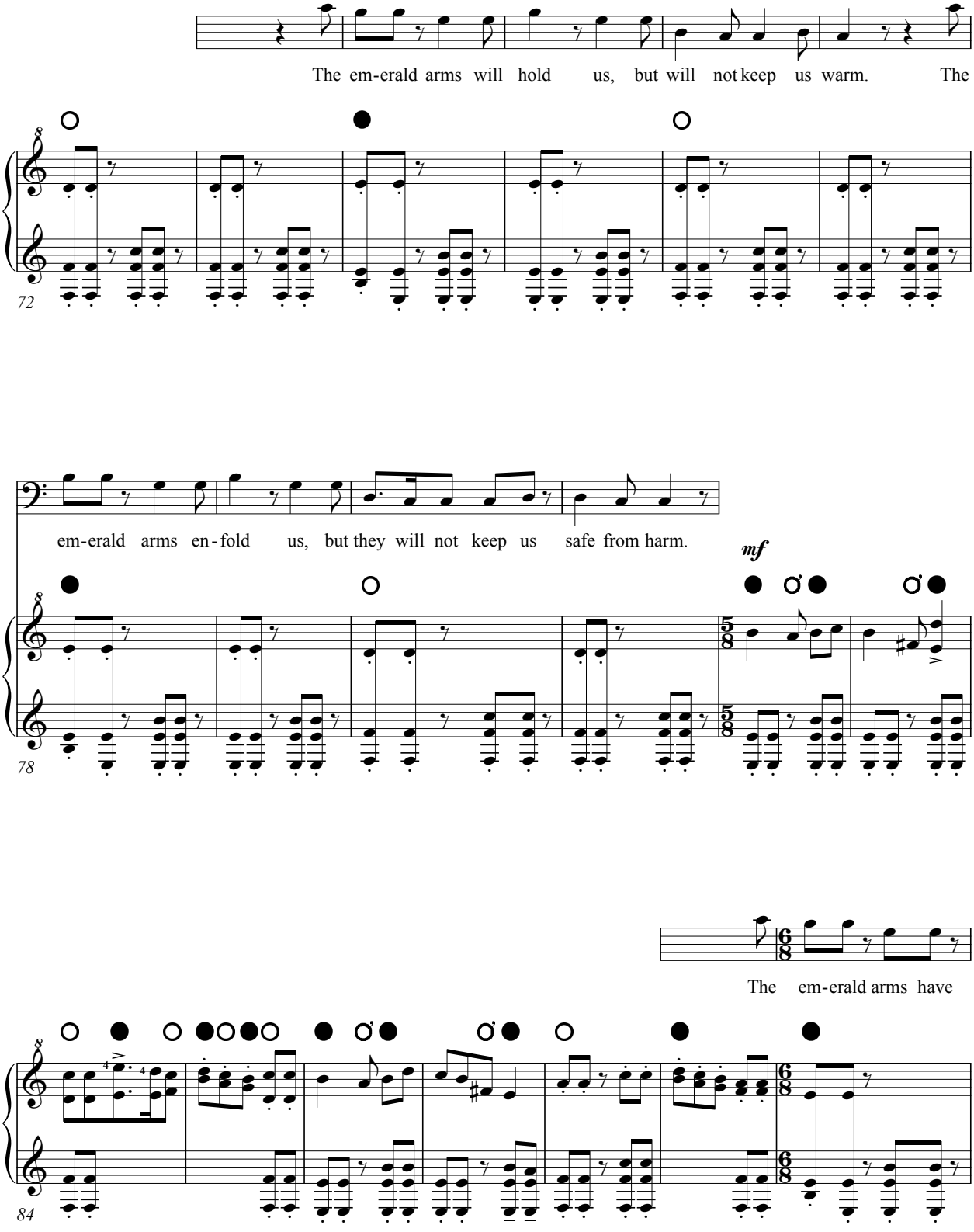
i. sonata

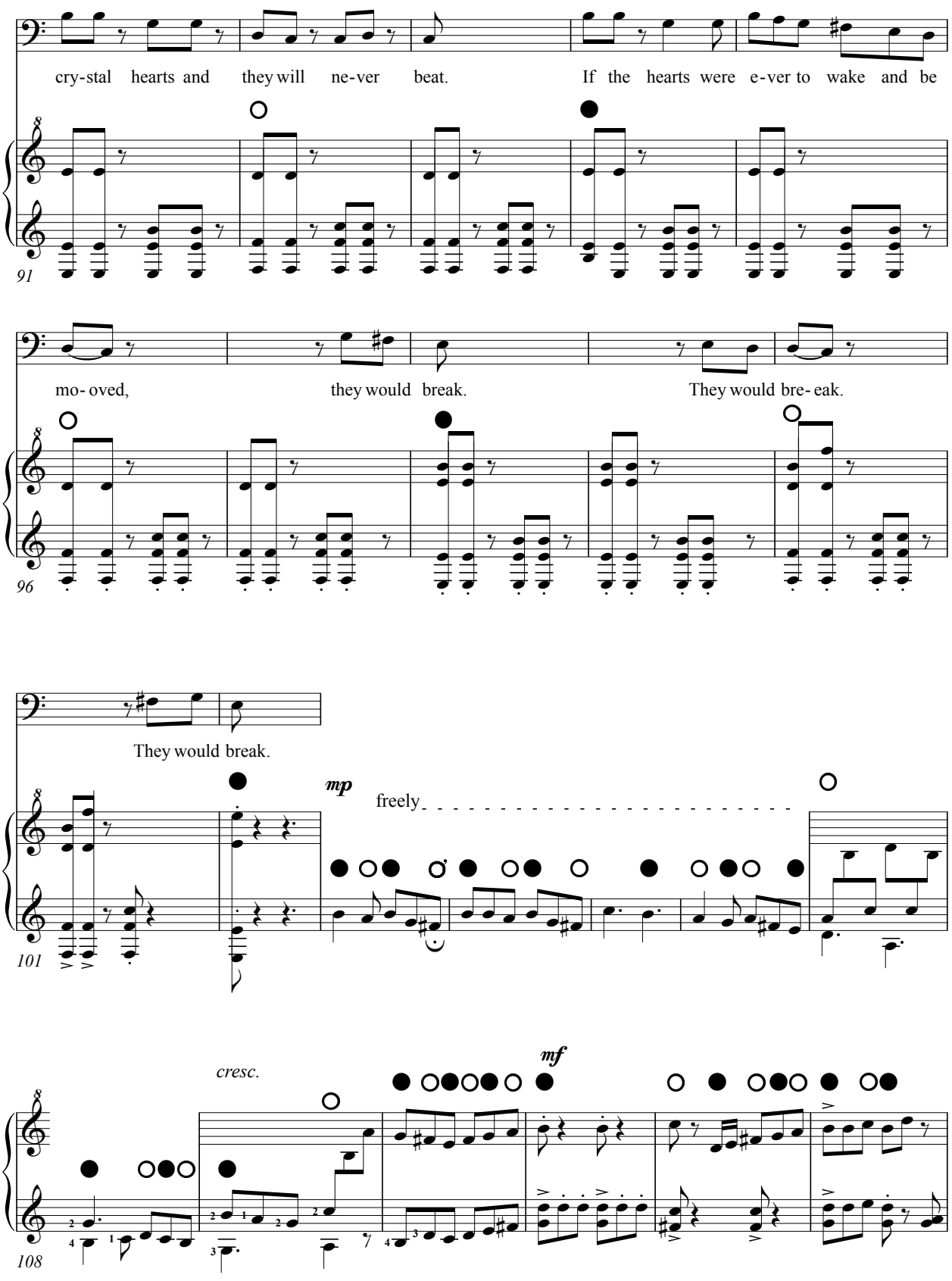
the emerald arms

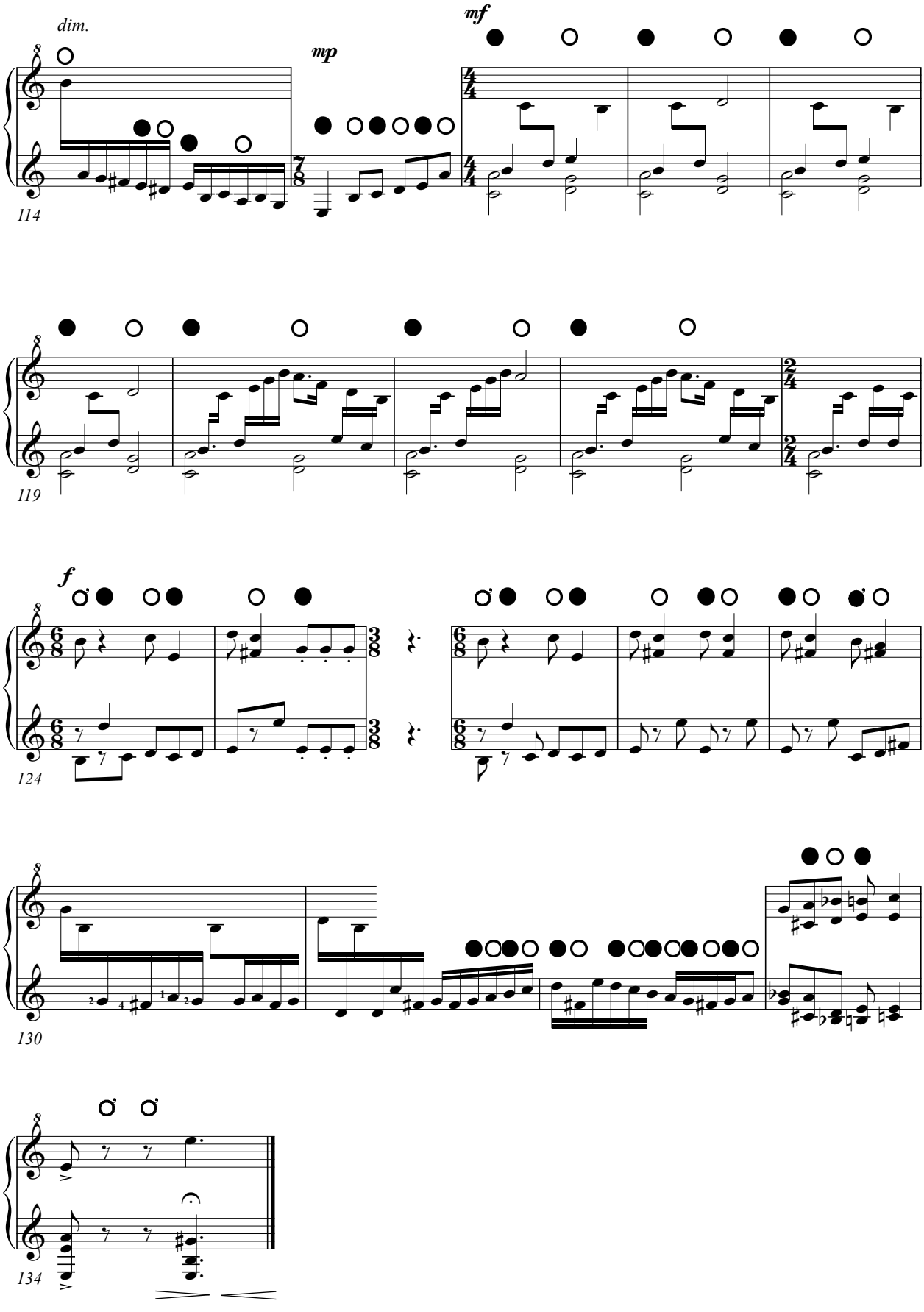

♩. = 55
mp
7
mf
13
20


Bars 30-37 are played only on the repeat of the explication.
The e - merald a - arms sur - ro - ound us. The
28
e - merald a - arms. The e - merald arms en-fold us in their ev - er-green em-
33
mf
brace.
37
♩.=45
mp
accel.
cresc.
♩.=55
41


mf
mp
cresc. gradually
47
f
dim.
54
mf
mp
60
f
mp
67

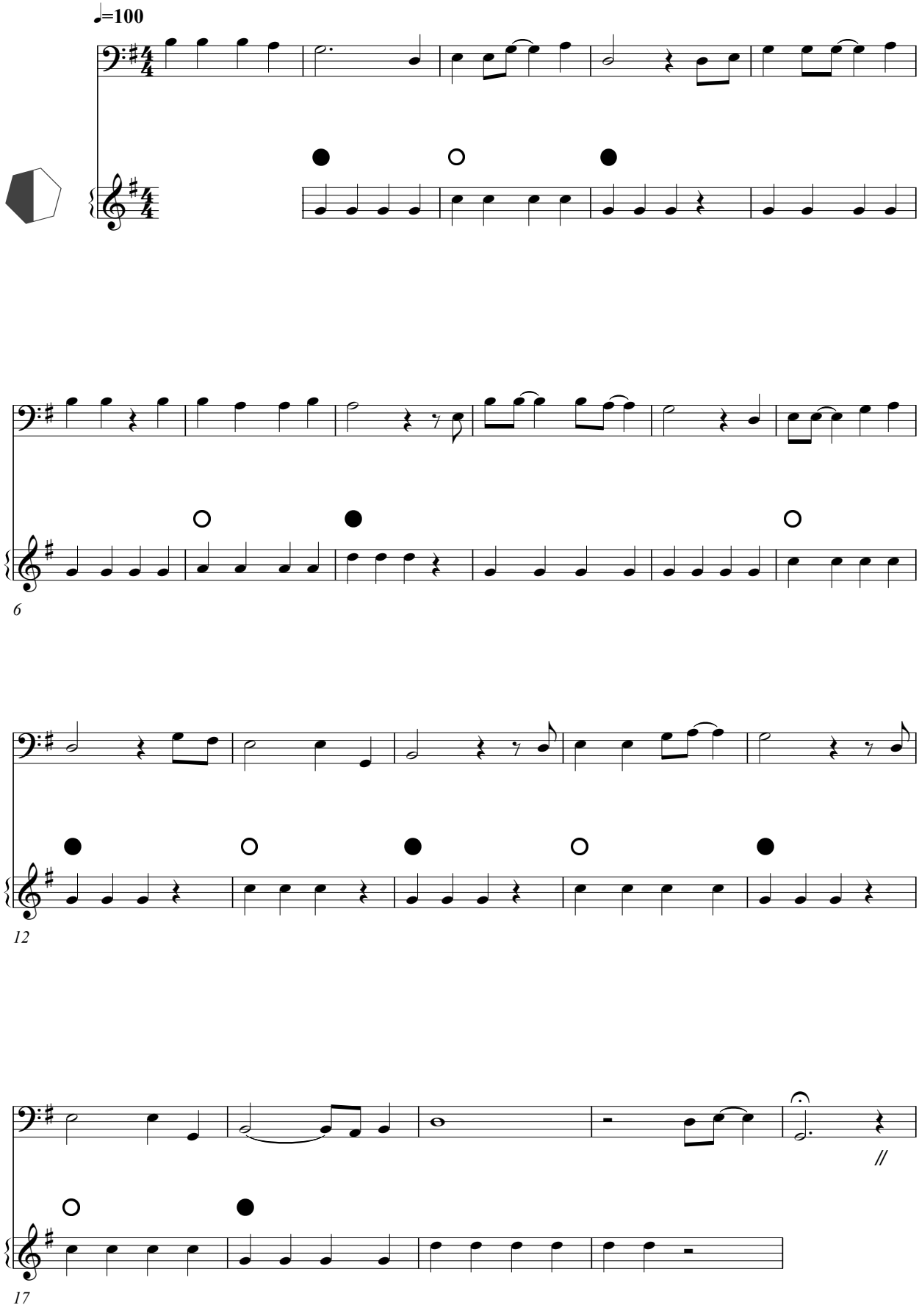

The em-erald arms will hold us, but will not keep us warm. The
72
em-erald arms en-fold us, but they will not keep us safe from harm.
mf
78
The em-erald arms have
84

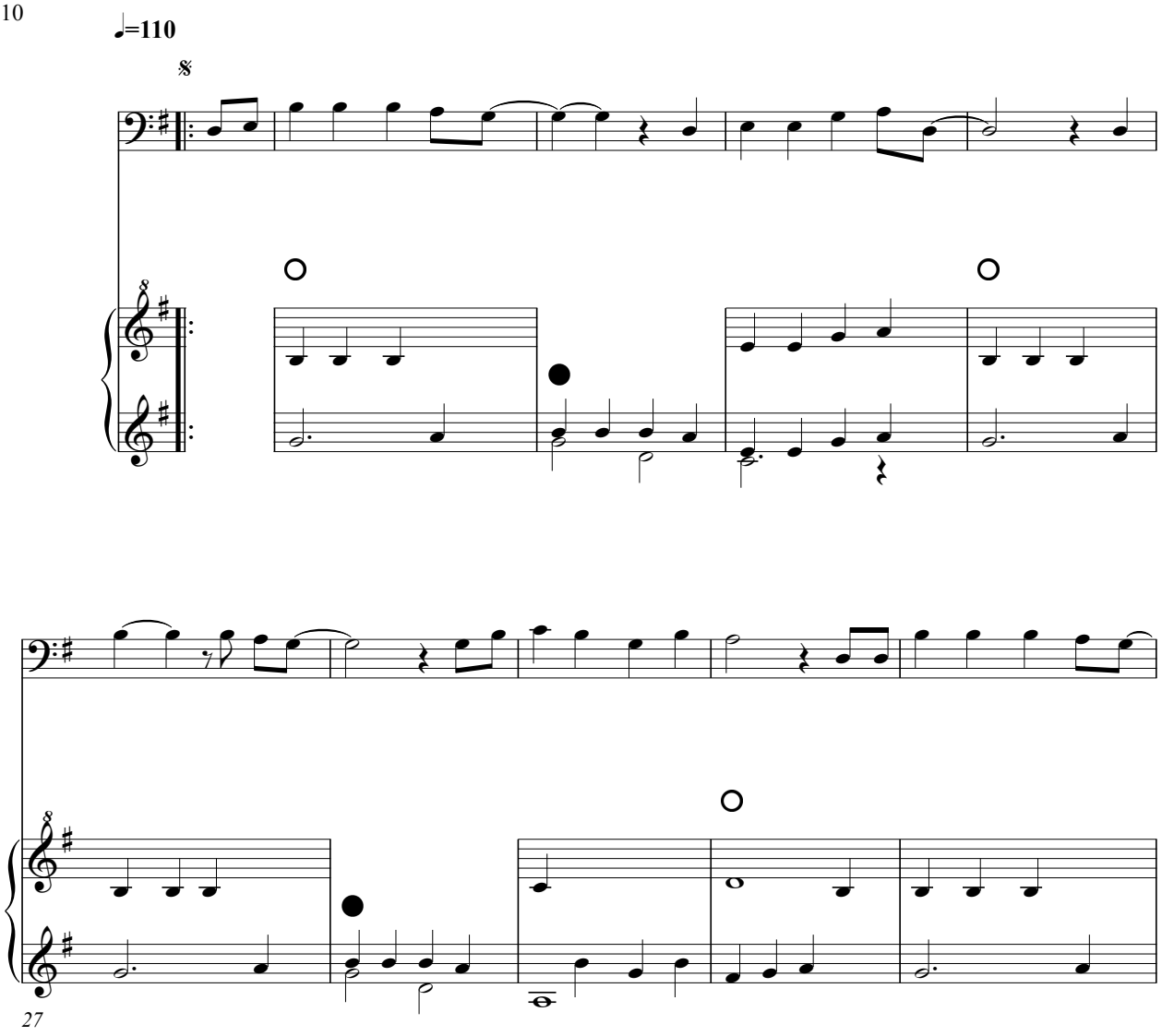

cry-stal hearts and they will ne-ver beat. If the hearts were e-ver to wake and be
91
mo- oved, they would break. They would bre- eak.
96
They would break.
mp
freely
101
cresc.
mf
108

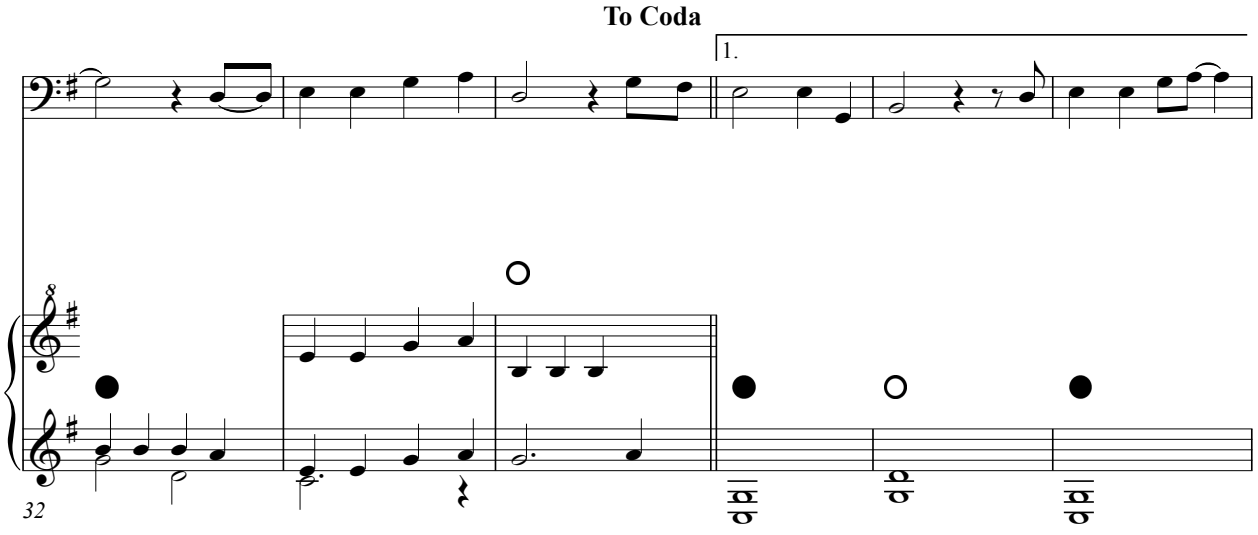

dim.
mp
mf
114
119
f
124
130
134

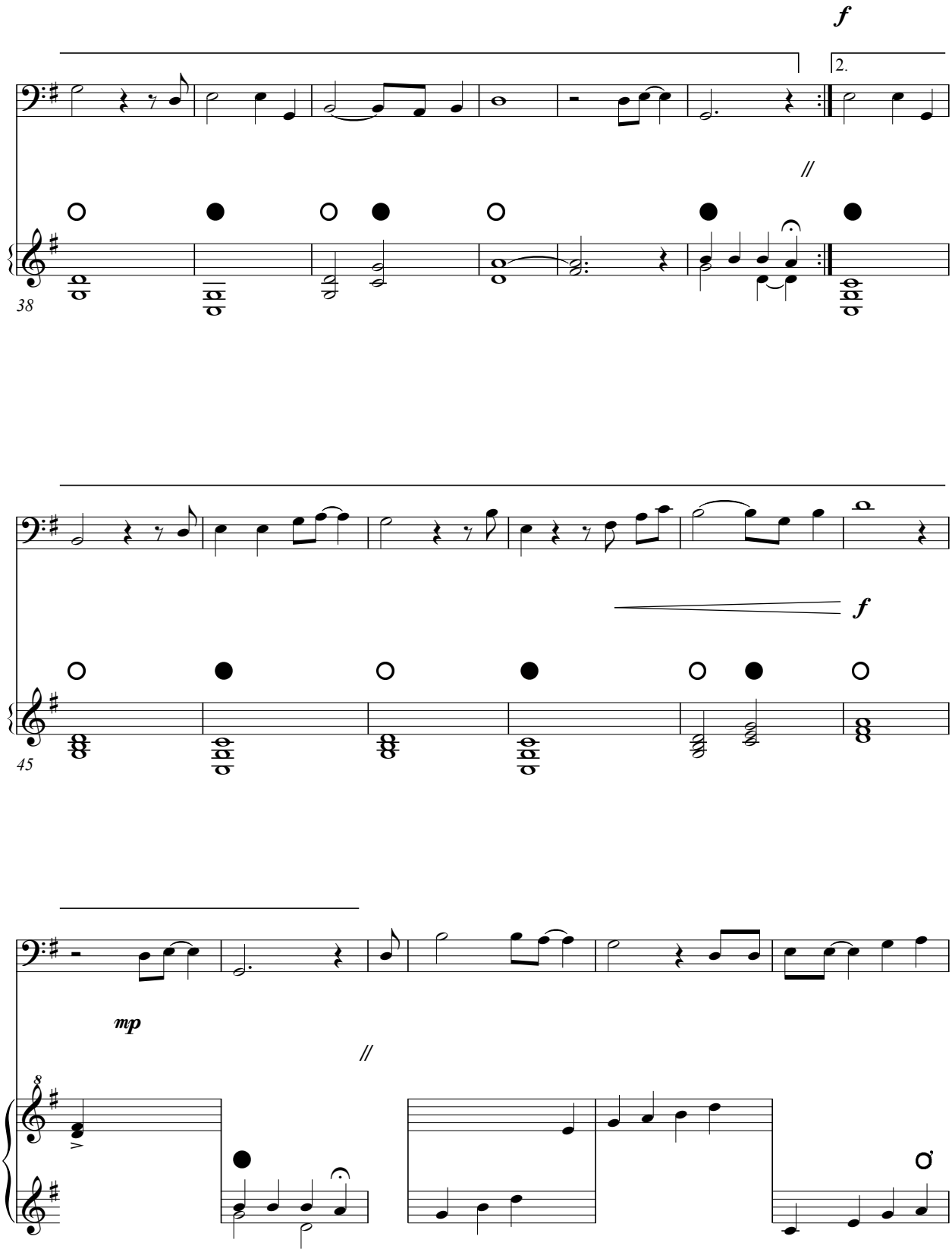
ii. song

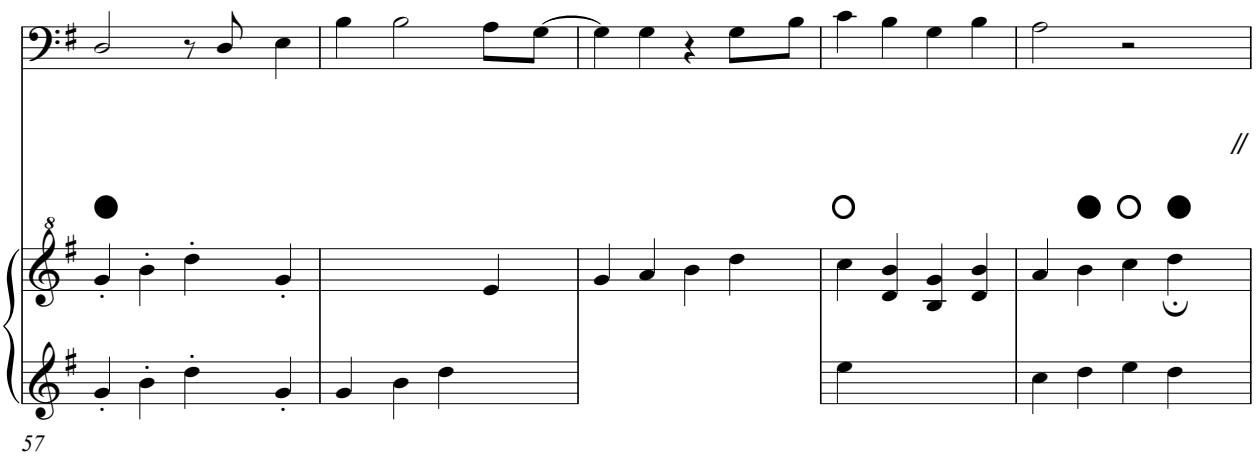
# i ain't got no home

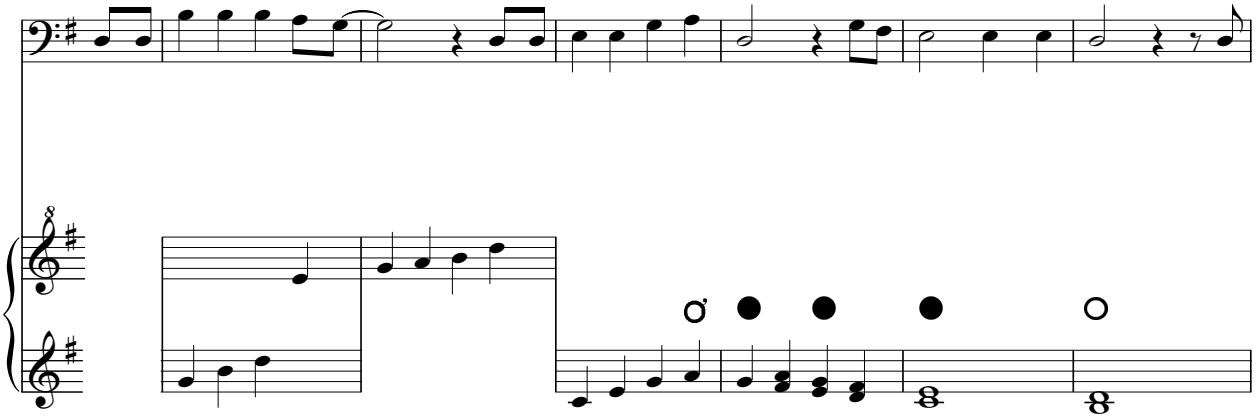

♩=100
6
12
17

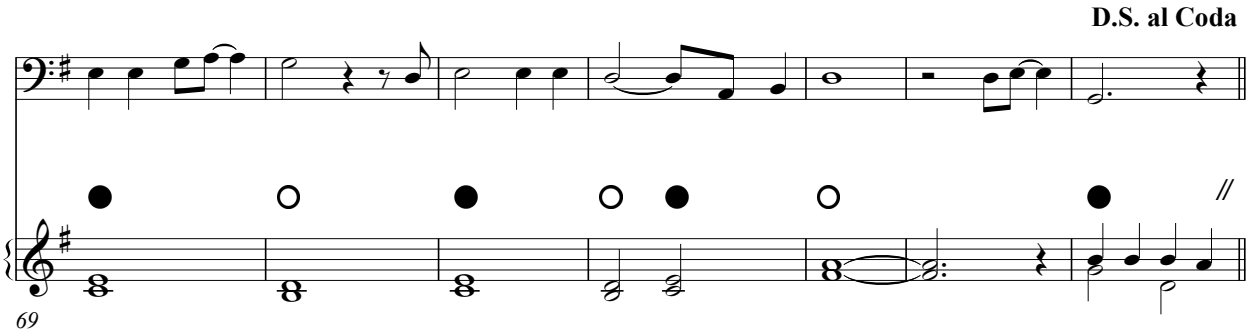

♩=110
𝄋
27

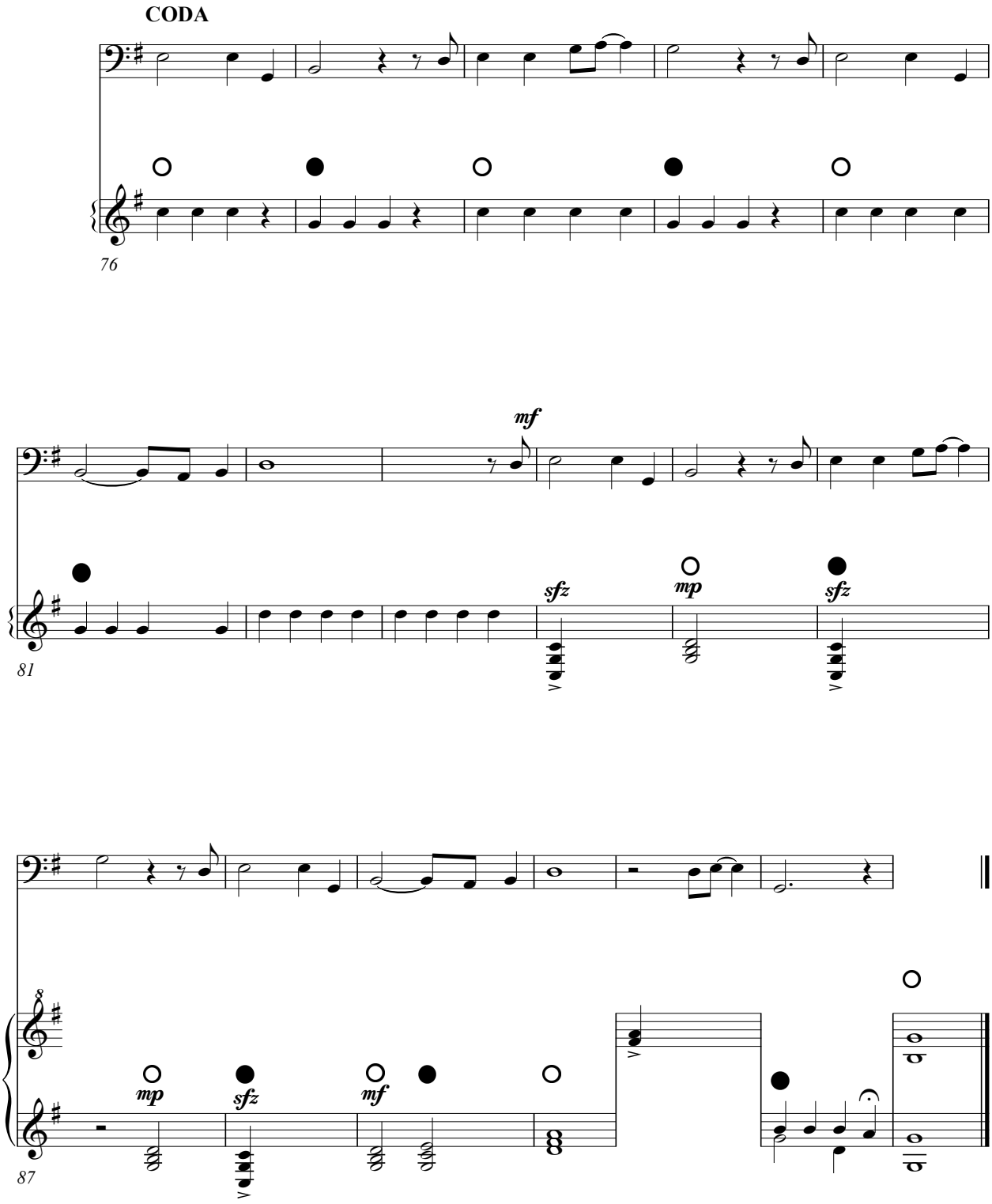

To Coda
1.
32


f
2.
38
45
f
mp


57

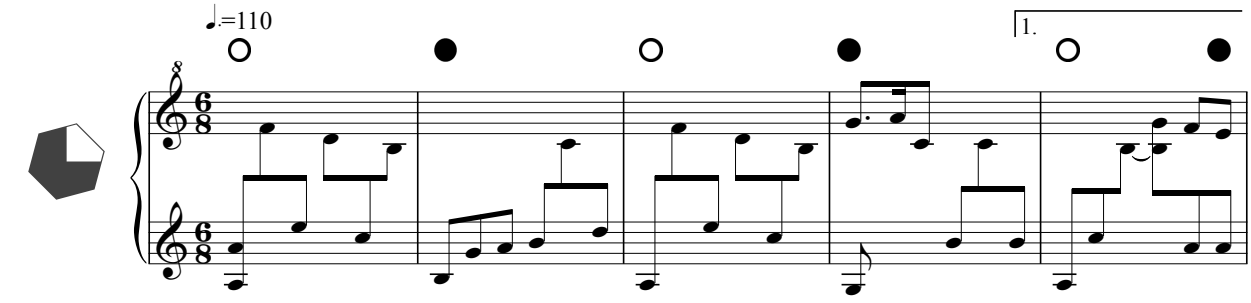


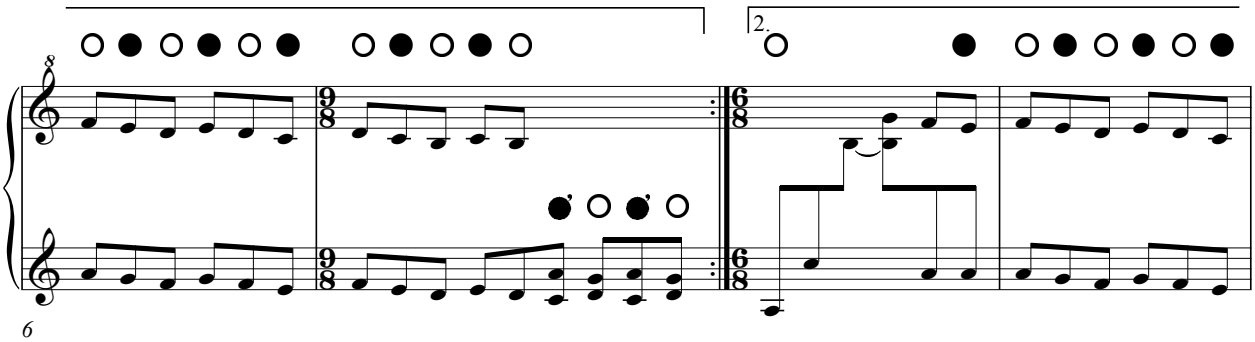

D.S. al Coda
69

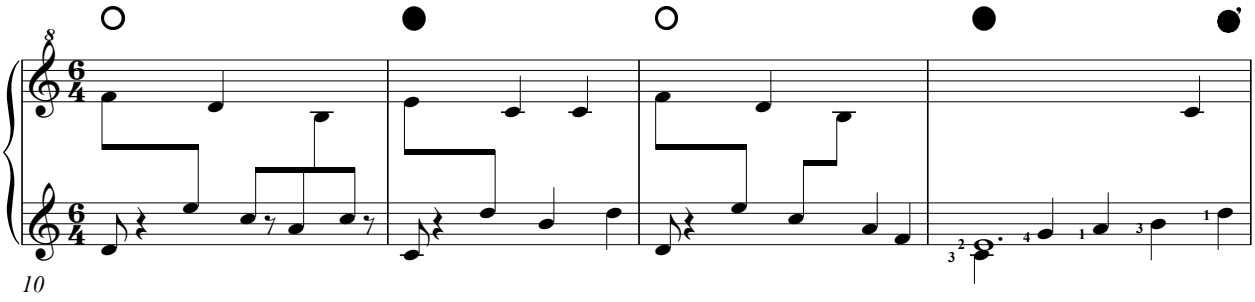

CODA
76
81
mf
sfz
mp
sfz
87
mp
sfz
mf

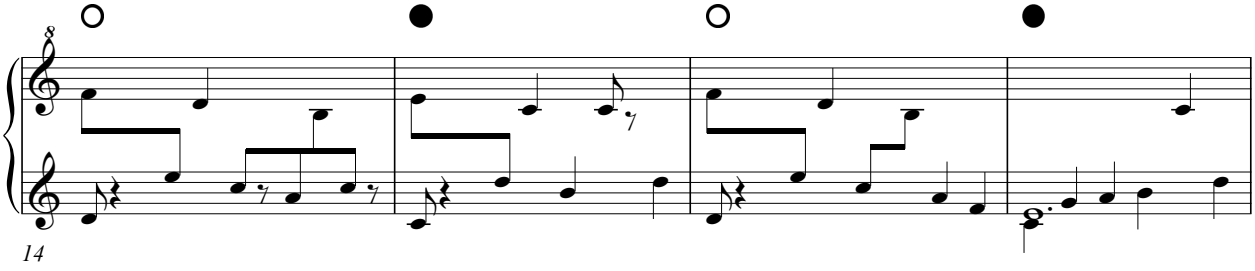
iii. trio/waltz

bow to your neighbor


♩.=110
1.


2.
6


10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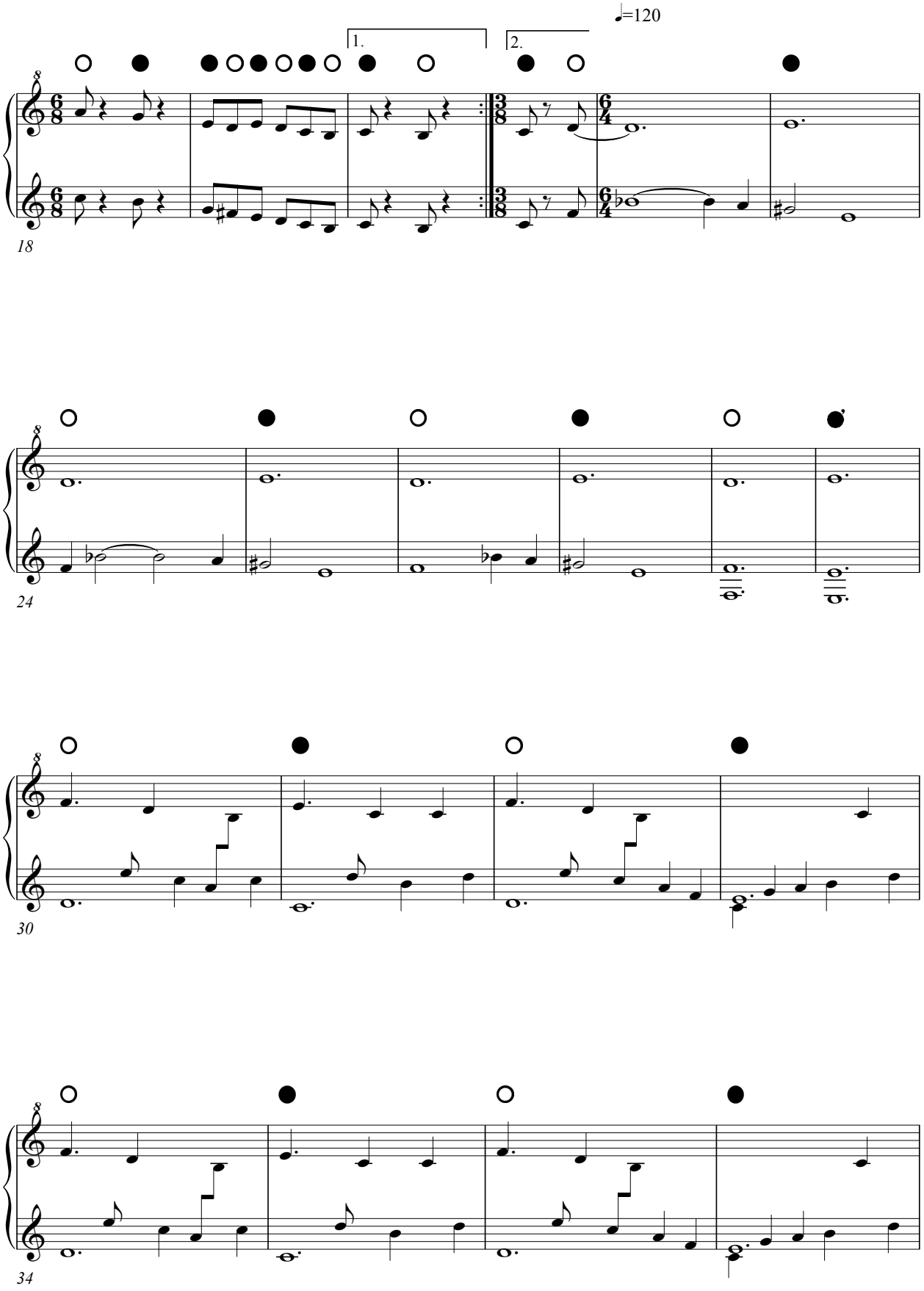
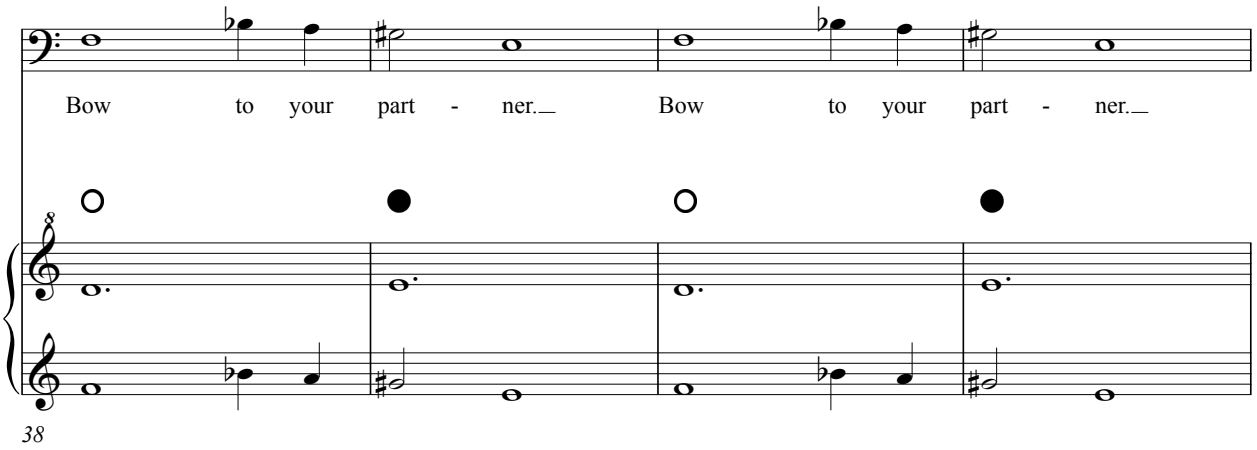
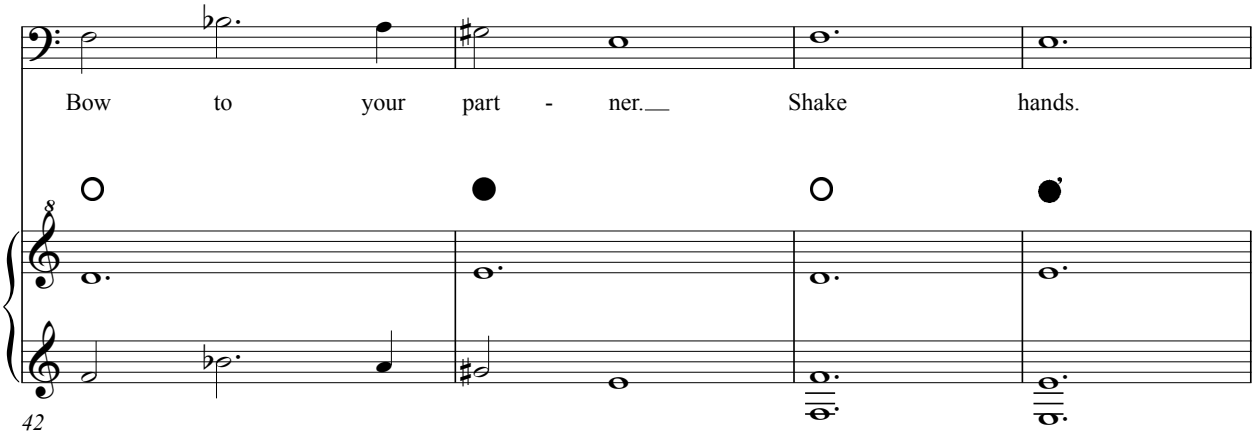
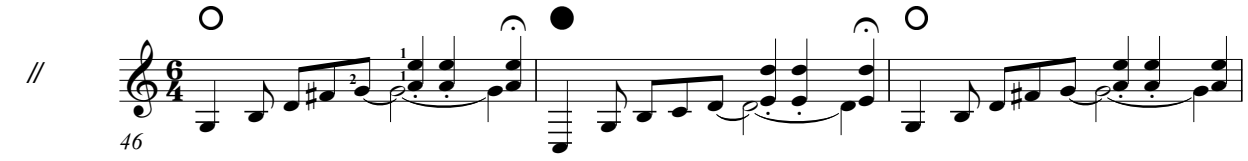
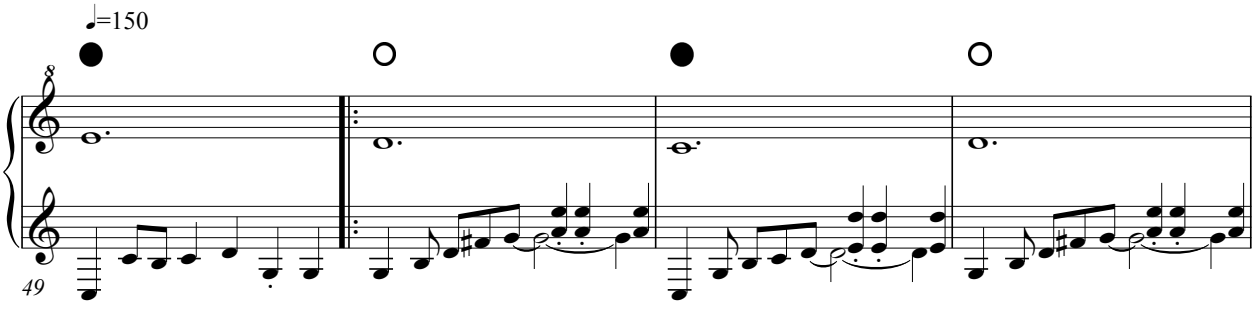
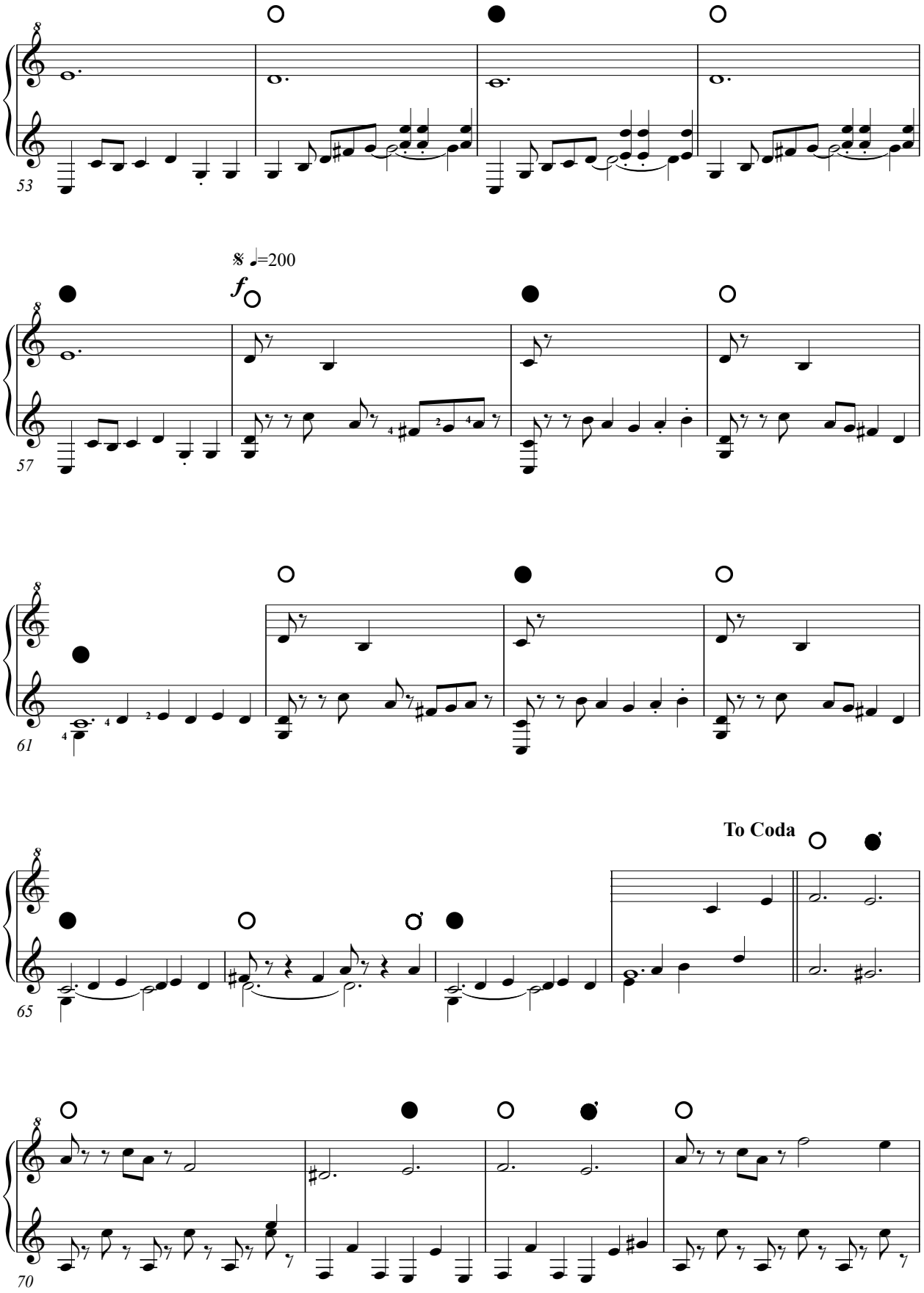

♩=120
1.
2.
18
24
30
34

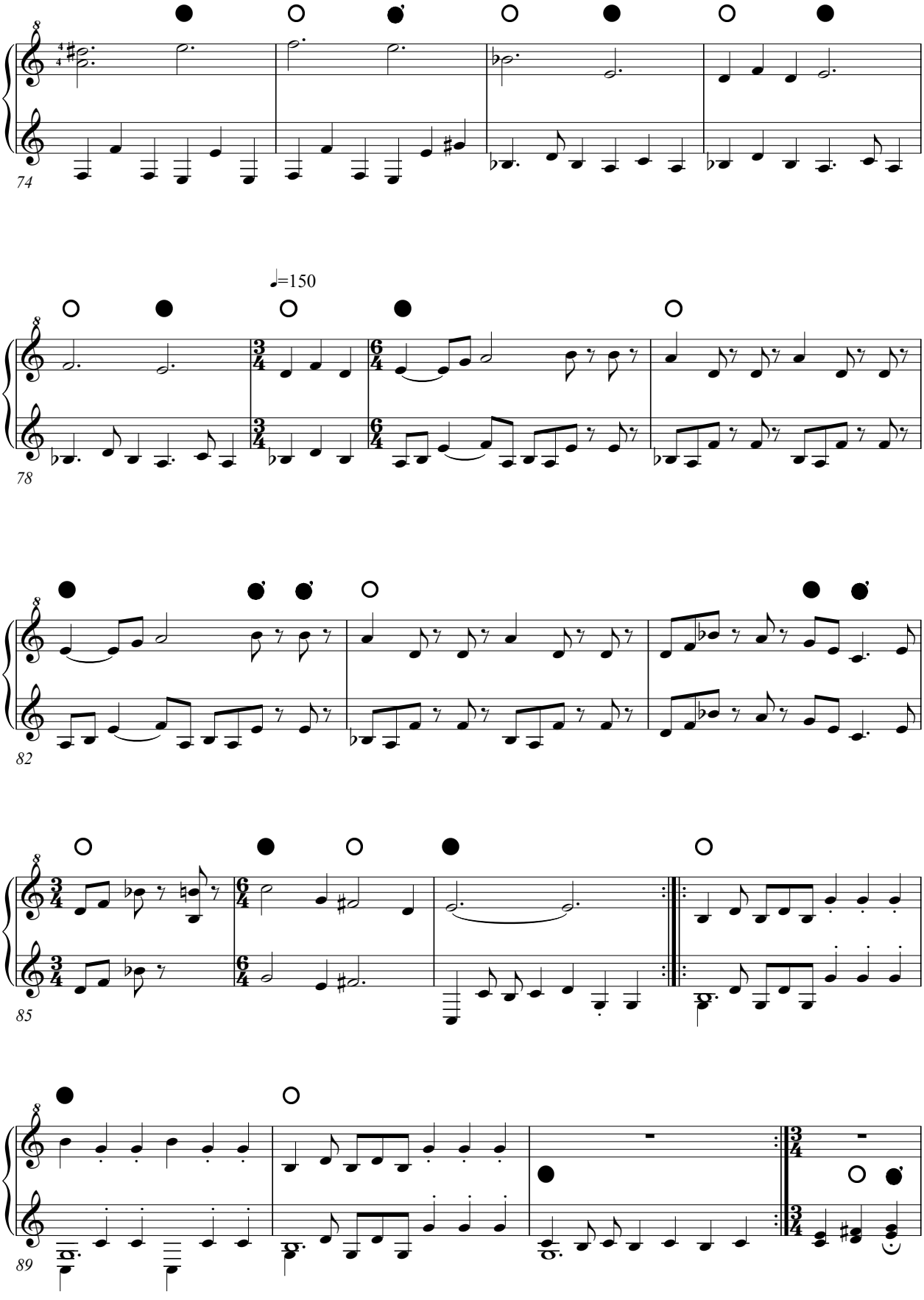

Bow to your part - ner. Bow to your part - ner.
38

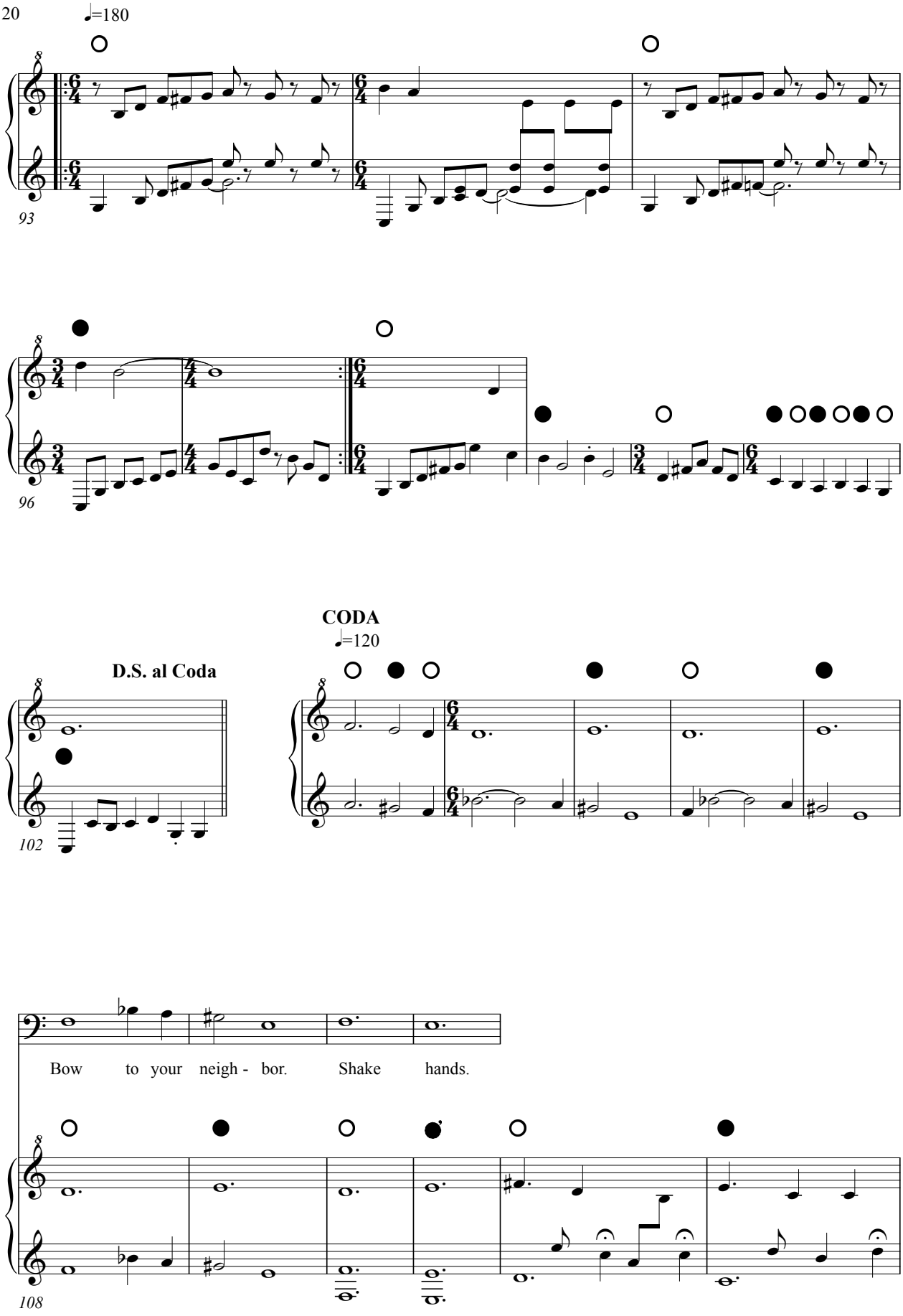

Bow to your part - ner. Shake hands.
42

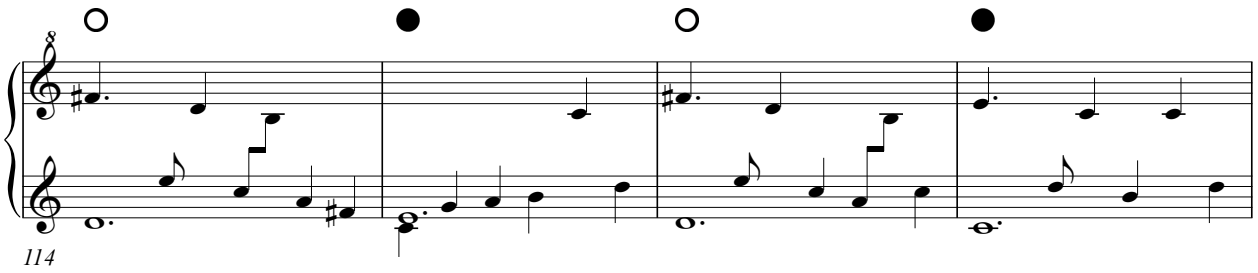

46

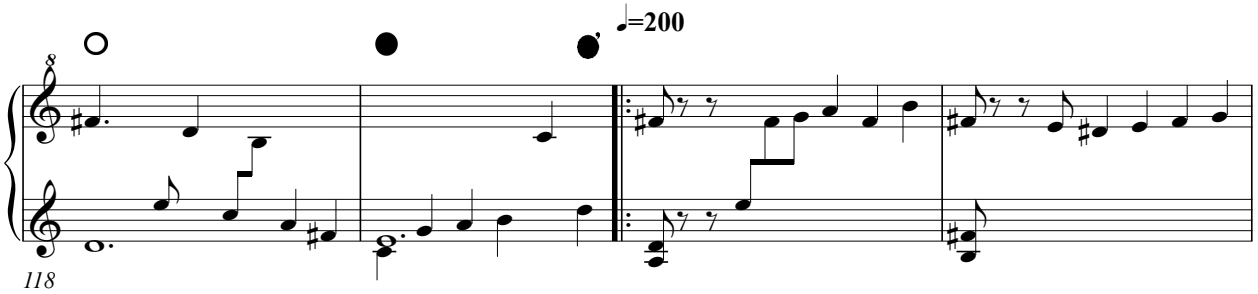

♩=150
49

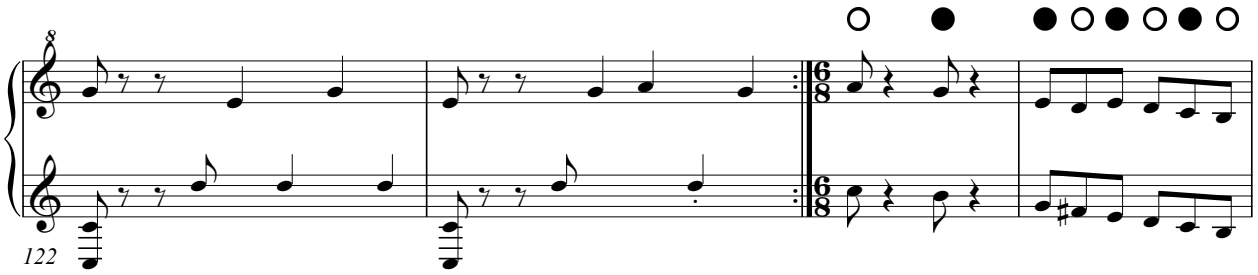

53
57
𝄋 ♩=200
f
61
65
To Coda
70

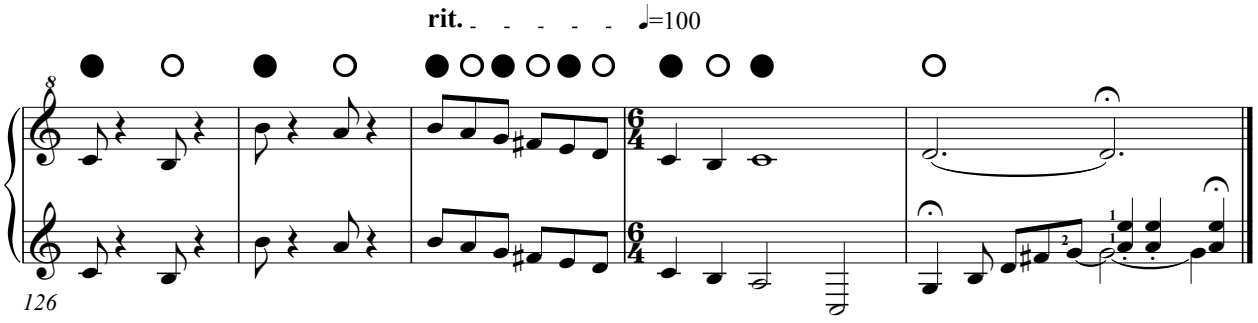

74
♩=150
78
82
85
89


♩=180
93
96
CODA
♩=120
D.S. al Coda
102
Bow to your neigh - bor. Shake hands.
108


114

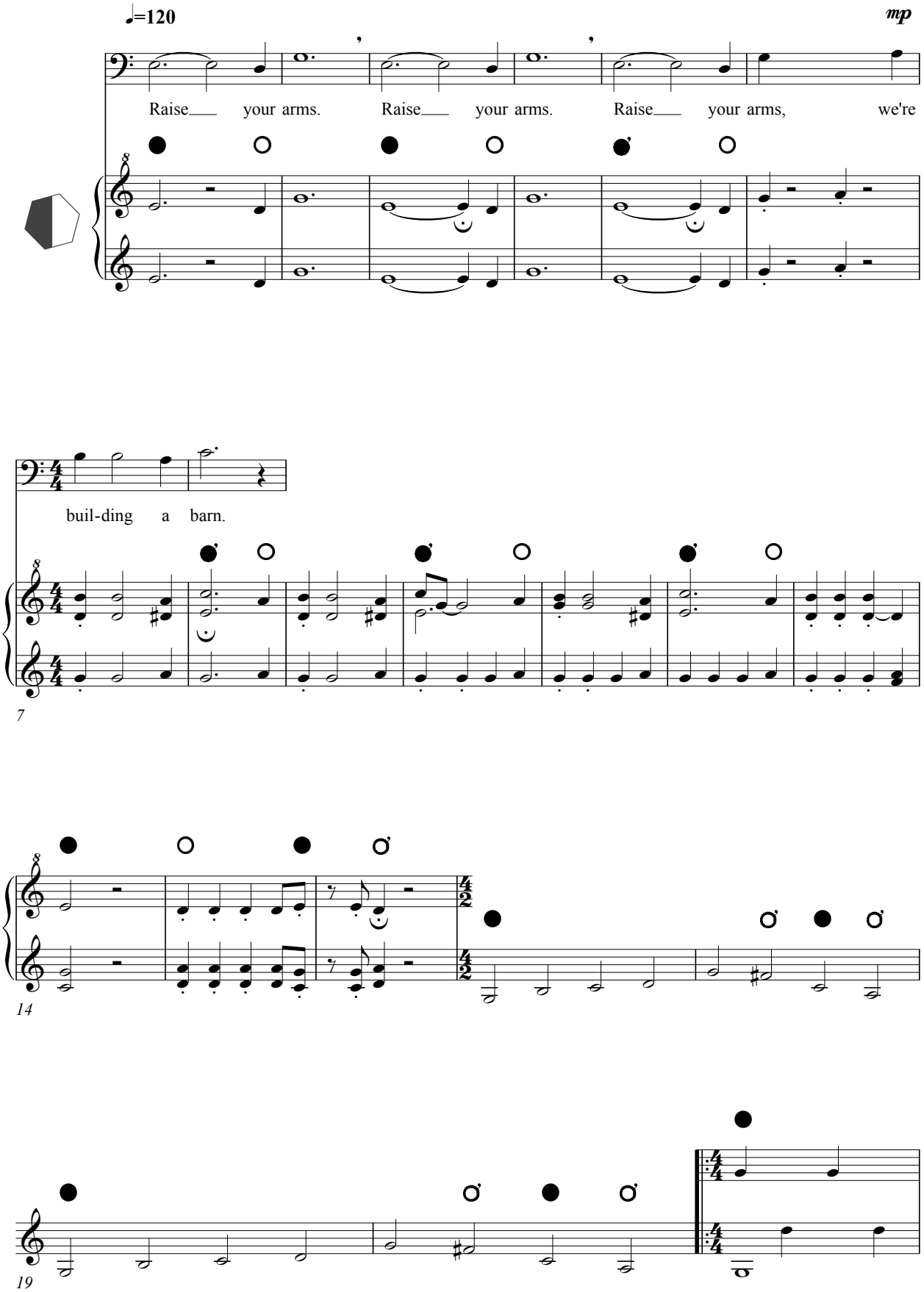

♩=200
118

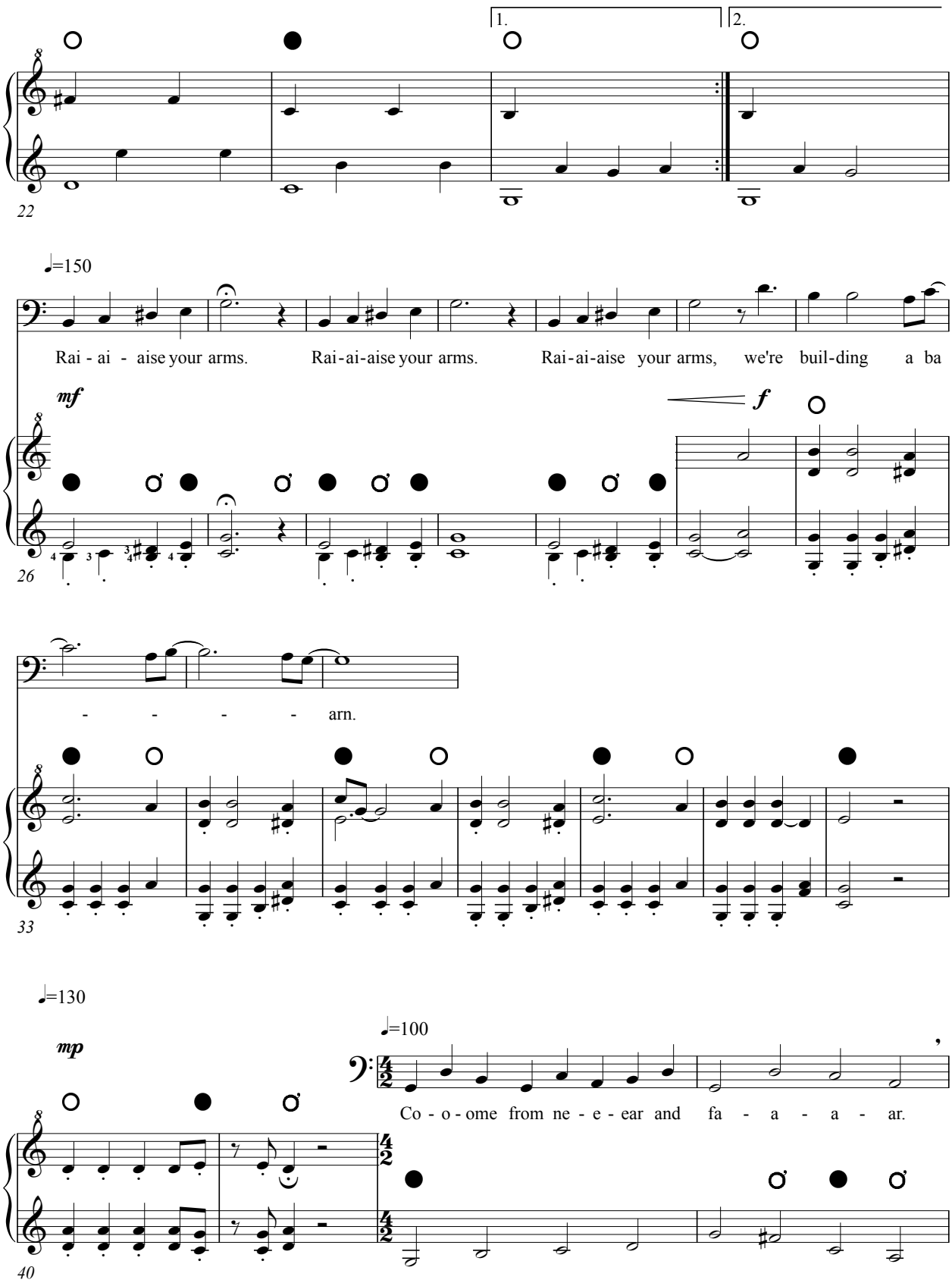

122

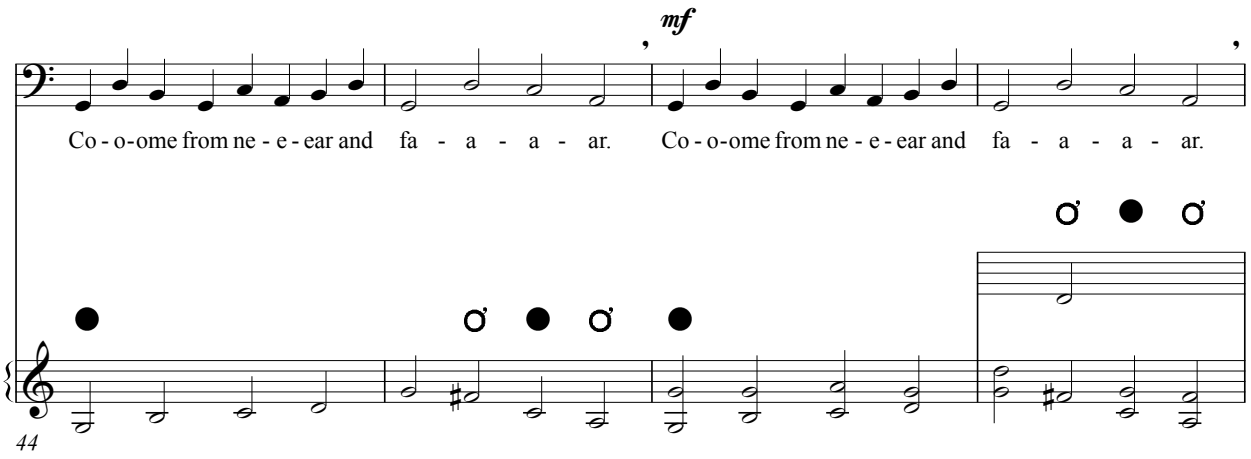

rit.
♩=100
126

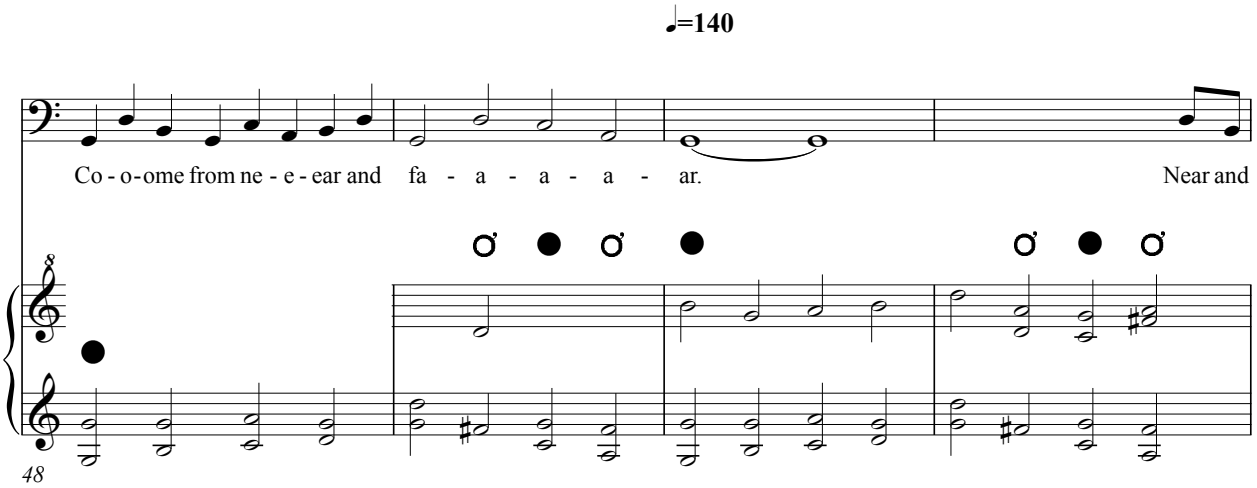
iv.

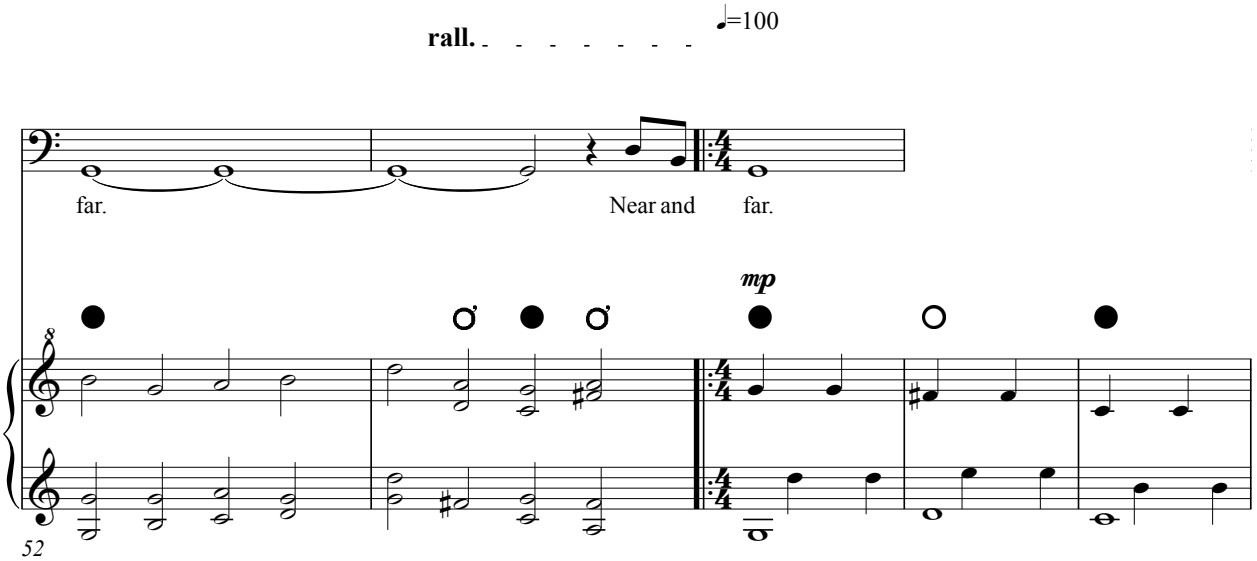
# the barn raising

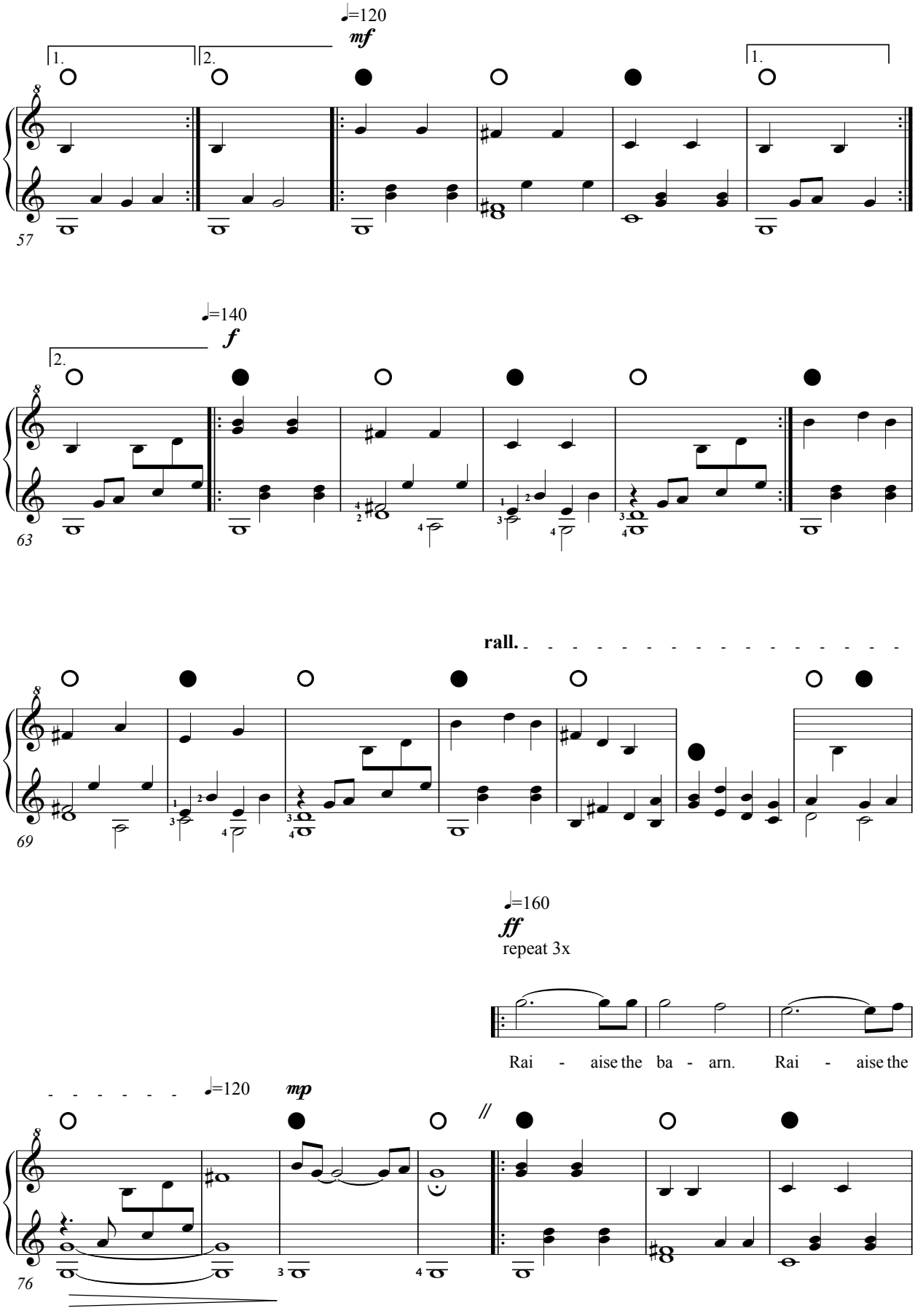

♩=120
mp
Raise your arms. Raise your arms. Raise your arms, we're
buil-ding a barn.
7
14
19


1.
2.
22
♩=150
Rai - ai - aise your arms. Rai-ai-aise your arms. Rai-ai-aise your arms, we're buil-ding a ba
mf
f
26
- - - - arn.
33
♩=130
mp
♩=100
Co - o - ome from ne - e - ear and fa - a - a - ar.
40


mf
Co - o-ome from ne - e - ear and fa - a - a - a - ar. Co - o-ome from ne - e - ear and fa - a - a - a - ar.
44


♩=140
Co - o-ome from ne - e - ear and fa - a - a - a - a - ar. Near and
48


rall.
♩=100
far. Near and far.
mp
52


♩=120
mf
1.
2.
1.
57
♩=140
f
2.
63
rall.
69
♩=160
ff
repeat 3x
Rai - aise the ba - arn. Rai - aise the
♩=120
mp
76

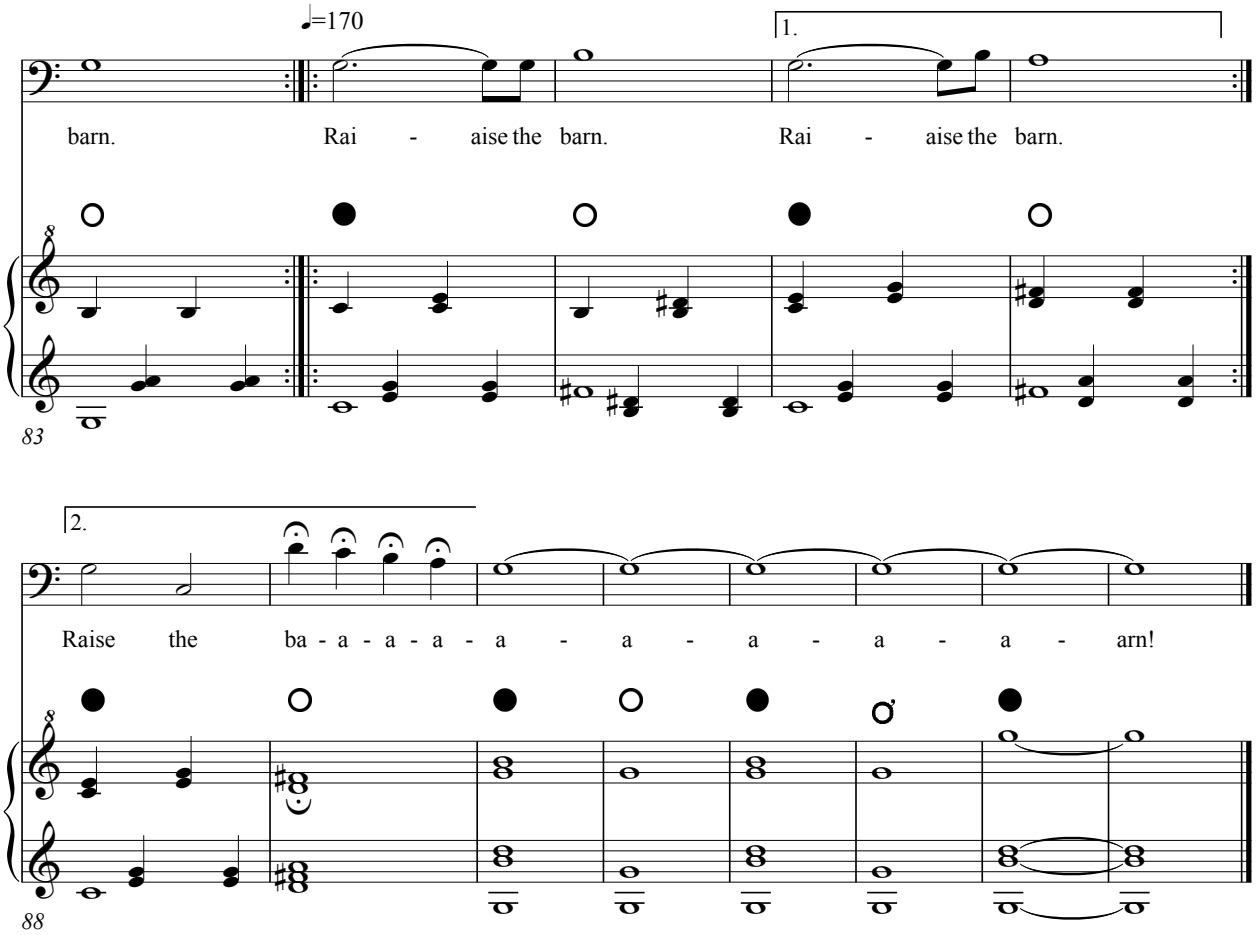

♩=170
1.
barn. Rai - aise the barn. Rai - aise the barn.
83
2.
Raise the ba - a - a - a - a - a - a - a - a - arn!
88

photo: Tony Dattilo

Steven Arntson was born in 1973 in Washington state. His first album of music for voice and concertina, *The Devil's Dreamworld*, is available as sheet music and recordings. Steven lives with his wife, Anne, in Seattle, where he teaches, writes, and composes. Visit www.stevenarntson.info for more information.